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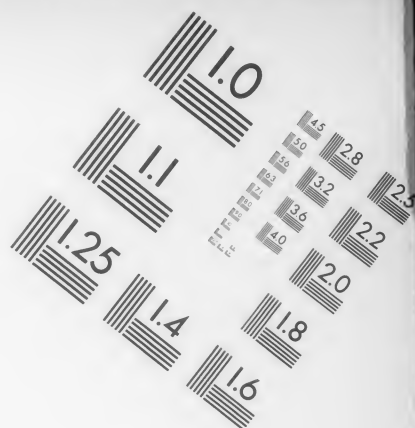
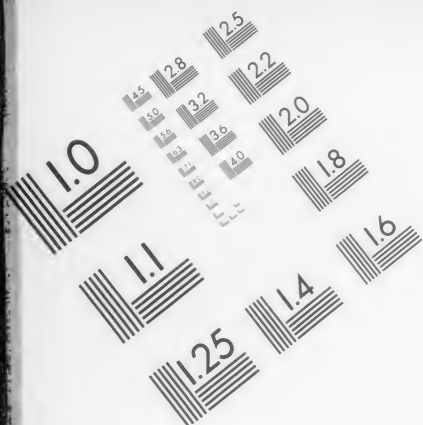


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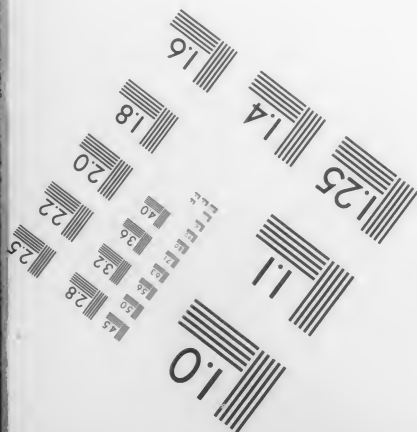
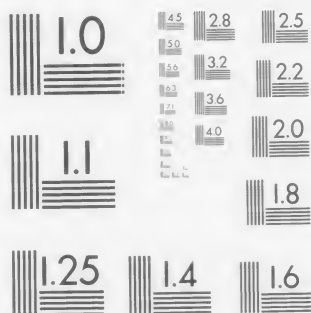
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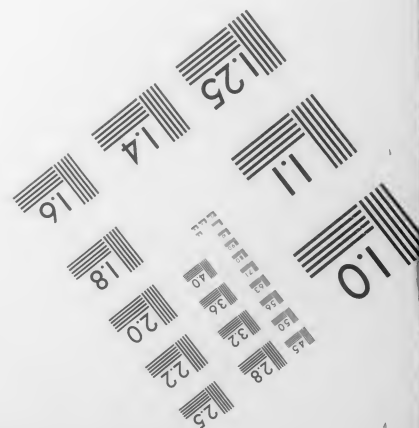
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THE LAW OF GOD

THE LAW OF GOD

BY
PRESIDENT CYRUS NORTHROP

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"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

MATTHEW V. 44.

THE LAW OF GOD

THE law of God, as it relates to our treatment of personal enemies, is clearly laid down in the closing verses of the Fifth Chapter of Matthew. No other part of the law is so hard for men to obey and obedience to no other part is more necessary in order to make men Christ-like. It is in brief this: "Ye have heard that it was said an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven."

The Christian world recognizes this, theoretically at least, as a divine command which is to be obeyed; and whenever a Christian admits malice and personal hatred into his heart, and cherishes them and does not make any effort to expel them, he knows perfectly well that he is no longer in a state of grace, but is in rebellion against God. There is undoubtedly an immense amount of this rebellion in the Christian Church; but that does not change in the least the law of God respecting the treatment of personal enemies.

That law is well established and well understood even if it is not well obeyed.

But a question of a different nature arises when we have to deal—not with personal enemies—but, so to speak, with public enemies, with knaves and evil-doers, who may be classed as the enemies of all righteousness, through whom all sorts of corruption are brought into society or the Church or the State. These may be frankly avowedly evil men, or they may be evil while pretending to be good. What is to be our attitude toward these? How are we to treat them as individuals?

According to the commonly accepted idea, the true and heroic soul must be ready at all times to defend all good and attack all evil. It must be utterly unselfish and self-sacrificing. It must be on the alert for the discovery of objects of attack and objects of defense. It must be untrammelled by circumstances and conditions. It must recognize no such thing as mere expediency. It must allow nothing but absolute right. In short, the hero must be a man of war to whom peace must not be permitted till every enemy of right and justice has been subdued.

That under this definition very few heroic souls can be found goes without saying. Recall your own experience in life and you will

not find it difficult to see that you have encountered a good deal of wrong, which you have not only done nothing to prevent, but against which you have not even borne any special testimony. It may not be humiliating to know that we are not heroic souls, as certainly most of us know that we are not; but it is humiliating to live in the midst of evil for the suppression of which we make no particular effort and to feel all the time that we are perhaps not only cowardly, but also guilty of criminal neglect.

I should be very sorry to say anything which would excuse a cowardly neglect of duty or let men feel comfortable while they permit all manner of wrong to be done which they possibly might prevent. But I am of the opinion that even the holiest of wars ought not to be entered into without discretion and that even for the individual in society, the highest morality permits the free use of the tomahawk and scalping knife much less frequently than is supposed. I wish to throw upon this most interesting and perplexing subject of a Christian's proper attitude towards wrong as embodied in bad men and bad measures, the light reflected from the teachings of Jesus, the world's greatest hero, whose precepts and examples alike it is our highest honor to follow. I shall be much

disappointed in the result if it shall not appear that the divine Master, whose soul in the presence of evil sometimes flashed with a Sinai-like righteous indignation and at other times was as gentle as a mother with her babe, has not left us some instruction that is not entirely in accord with the Christian world's commonly received opinions on this subject.

One of the favorite methods of Jesus for imparting truth was the parable. Everybody must admit that His parables present truth in a very vivid and impressive manner. One may easily lose the connection of thought and mistake the logic of Paul's epistles. But no one need ever miss the point in one of Jesus' parables. The simplicity and clearness with which they are expressed cannot easily be improved. They so perfectly reflect human experience in all ages that they are as instructive today as they were when they were first uttered by Jesus. One of these interesting parables is that of the tares and the wheat. A certain man sowed good seed in his field, but in the night an enemy sowed tares. When the grain appeared, the tares also appeared. The servants of the farmer were much disturbed at the appearance of the tares and asked the master if he wished them to go and gather the tares up. But he answered with

great wisdom, "No, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat also. Let both grow together till the harvest. And in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them—but gather the wheat into my barn."

Now, as an abstract proposition, tares are bad and they are especially bad among wheat. Under certain conditions nothing wiser could be done than to gather up the tares as soon as they are discovered; but if they are so mixed with the wheat as to be not easily separated, and the destruction of the one is to be the destruction of the other, true wisdom says, wait awhile.

The simple statement of this parable, in perfect accord as it is with Jesus' practice, illuminates the subject we are considering. What is wanted is wheat. The question of tares or no tares is of no consequence except in its relation to the wheat. If to root up the tares is to root up the wheat it would be the height of folly to disturb either; and if by possibility the wheat can grow to a mature and profitable harvest in spite of the tares, then it is the highest wisdom to let both grow together. And this truth, so simply drawn from the ordinary operations of the farmer's field, governments in the exercise of their exalted pow-

ers, and churches in their disciplinary zeal, and individuals with more of the zeal of the servant than of the wisdom of the master, all alike will do well to heed.

We may deduce from this teaching the general proposition that we may not do even a right act, nor an act which under other circumstances would be a positive duty, if the outcome is to be injurious to the Kingdom of God; or, to express it more secularly, if the outcome is to be destructive of the general good. In other words, Jesus teaches what Paul taught. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. I may do things or refuse to do things on the ground of expediency. I am not required to hit every knave's head that I see, if as a consequence a number of honest people, including myself, are going to have their heads broken. Human society is a very complex affair. The dependence and interdependence of the parts are so complex as to baffle analysis. Perhaps there is nothing more disturbing to the peaceful working of this organization than a well-meaning moral lunatic who insists on his right to run a muck—who rushes here and there and everywhere, stabbing right and left at all whom he encounters, and who insists also that everybody who does not run a muck with him is a coward and a knave. His

fanatic soul never pauses for an instant to consider the possibility of destroying good as well as evil.

It is unquestionable that we are obliged to endure, with what patience we may, a great deal of evil simply because we cannot get rid of it without bringing on others a great deal of undeserved trouble and suffering and imperiling the general welfare. Jesus bore in silence the tyranny and injustice of the Roman power as exercised in Judea over His own people, although the destruction of the Roman power and the liberation of the Jews was what the Jews expected of the promised Messiah; and the silent patience of the Divine Master has been a power for good in the world through the centuries far transcending all that could have been accomplished through open denunciation of the Romans or incitement of His countrymen to rebellion. He was a reformer—but not a destructive reformer. The evolution of goodness was what He was seeking, and His silence respecting many public evils is suggestive alike of the most sublime patience and of the highest wisdom.

Every thoughtful man who looks at the world as it is today must be impressed by the strange blending of good and evil, not merely in the world as a whole, but in its various organizations, and even in the character of in-

dividuals. No matter how noble may be the purpose for which institutions exist, none of them are found to be perfect in operation; and no matter how grand a man may be in his character, no one is to be found who is not more or less like Nebuchadnezzar's image—some part of him at least clay, and therefore, easily broken.

In this mixed condition of human society and human character we are really none of us qualified to pass final judgment upon our fellows and proceed to execution; nor are we called upon to do so. You remember that memorable scene recorded in the eighth chapter of John, where the Scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman deserving death under the law and asked Him what they should do to her, and He answered: He that is without sin among you—without this sin—let him be the first to cast a stone at her. There wasn't any such man in the crowd. They, when they heard Jesus' answer, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last. And Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst.

If we are not qualified to pass final judgment upon our fellow men, it is manifest that, while we cannot help having opinions as to people's character, we are under no obligation

to express our judgment of men, even bad men, as we think, and to vindicate our judgment by our own acts—except so far as Jesus did—and the exception, as will appear later in this address, is a most important one.

In general, established governments are to be obeyed, but there is such a thing as the right of revolution. But this is not an unqualified right. It is not permitted to every dissatisfied citizen to raise the standard of revolt, even though the government be unjust and oppressive. There must be a reasonable prospect of success.

Revolution means bloodshed and misery—an awful uprooting of wheat as well as of tares. No nation should be plunged into this recklessly without any prospect of bettering its condition after all its bloody struggles. So that even in matters so large and dreadful as revolutions, the question of expediency is a controlling one; and the would-be revolutionists are bound to inquire whether, as a result of their plans, more good or more evil is likely to be experienced. And if this is true of conflicts with organized society or government, it is not less true of conflicts with parties, churches, and individuals. Conflicts may be entered into wisely only when great evils are likely to be removed without greater evils being produced. A church suffers from the

presence of a disreputable member; but it is a good deal better to let that tare grow until the harvest, than to stir up a church quarrel, generally the fiercest of all quarrels, and root up a great many stalks of wheat. Let both grow together till the harvest, says the Master, lest while ye root up the tares ye root up the wheat also.

The entire history of persecutions in connection with the Christian Church is a history of attempts to root up supposed tares before the harvest. The line of persecution is almost unbroken through the centuries—Saul verily thinking he ought to do what he did against the Christians; Catholics persecuting Protestants, and Protestants persecuting one another and Catholics when they got the chance—down even to the early days of New England, when the Puritans—not the Pilgrims—persecuted Quakers and Baptists; and the echoes still come to us from ecclesiastical councils which discipline or excommunicate men for differing with their brethren in creed or worship—the power of putting to death no longer existing—and as one travels back over the ground on which these historic events have occurred, it is painful to see that there is much more of wheat wilted and shriveled in the sun than there is of tares uprooted.

"No half-way measures," says the fanatic.

"Perfection or nothing." This is all nonsense. It is not Christ-like. Tearing everything to pieces is not Christ's plan. Because Cæsar gets more than he ought and God less than he ought, "Down with Cæsar, and give him nothing," says the fanatic. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's," says Jesus, even at the moment when Cæsar is a tyrant lording it over Judea.

Charles A. Dana was once Horace Greeley's assistant on the New York *Tribune*. He exhibited the same characteristics for which he was noted many years as editor of the New York *Sun*. Any public man whom he had reason, as he thought, to believe to be a fraud or a knave, he attacked most mercilessly. His victims of course writhed under his attacks and they and their friends became enemies of the *Tribune*. Mr. Greeley stood it as long as he could, but at last he called a halt, exclaiming, "Dana, no paper on earth can stand it to attack *all* the scoundrels in the world."

There are a great many people who are glad to see scoundrels exposed and attacked; but there are not very many who wish to join in the attack. They look on with complacency because the attack seems proper enough and they are not in it and therefore no odium at-

taches to them. It is for this reason that political reform is for the most part spasmodic or a failure. Somebody discovers that reform is needed and he tries to bring it about. The rest look on perfectly willing that he should try and even hoping that he will succeed—but without them. He does try—gets little sympathy and less help—soon finds that the forces of evil are much more compact and better organized than the forces of good—finds himself at last defeated and alone—and retires from the contest with a firm determination that the next man who tries to do anything for public and political reform, shall be somebody else than himself.

When we contemplate the condition of things even in our own country, or shall I say especially in our own country, we cannot fail to be impressed with the undesirable character of much which goes on. Bribery and corruption are manifestly dangerous to the republic. This is a representative government. We cannot meet in mass conventions for legislative purposes as New England has so long done in her town meetings. We choose our representatives. They with the representatives of all the rest of the people make laws and elect United States Senators who help to make laws for the whole country. Now, if the representative refuses to represent;

if he is open to offers of pecuniary benefit for his vote; if he will vote for the candidate for senator who will give him the most money or offer him the best place; if he will vote for or against bills for public acts for a bribe, he has betrayed his constituents and set an example which if generally followed would make a farce of government and put all power into the hands of those who are rich enough and corrupt enough to buy legislatures. Such things are done and we know it. They are disgraceful, of course, to the briber and the bribed. But what are you going to do about it? The man who bought the votes has his seat in the United States senate or whatever else he wanted, all safe enough. The man who sold his vote has his money in his pocket—or in some other place where it cannot be traced—and he does not feel a bit lonely, for there are so many others who have had their pockets lined in the same way that he has no lack of companionship. Nobody doubts what has been done. Nobody can prove anything, and if anybody did prove anything the matter would be whitewashed and he would have his trouble for his pains. Such things go on in almost every state in the union. They are disreputable, wrong, destructive of the best interests of the country. You regret to have things so; but you are busy and cannot look

closely into these matters. If your own representative is guilty you will see to it that he does not get nominated again. You go to the next caucus, and sure enough the unfaithful representative is not a candidate. A new man is up for nomination—apparently a clean man—one who can be trusted. You are delighted and gladly vote for him, and he is elected—but you learn later that he is the twin brother of the last man. Of course I am not speaking of this particular legislative district in which we are assembled. I need not say that this district has not been represented recently by that sort of men. I am speaking of what is true in many more places and states than it ought to be; and I am calling attention not to the fact that so much bribery and corruption and trading exist, as everybody knows, but to the apparent helplessness of the people who do not like it and yet do not prevent it. They grumble and complain and call hard names and then let things go till the next election, when they generally go to the polls and help elect a brother-in-law of the twins.

Now the trouble with many reformers in politics is that they are a great deal more bent on pulling up tares than they are on raising wheat, and yet, wheat is the only good thing to be got and if there is no wheat the tares do no special harm. One saloon

more or less in Sodom would make but little difference. To illustrate—let me, without offense to any one, say a few words respecting what so many people profess to have a holy horror of—the machine in politics. What is a machine? It is “a combination of bodies so connected that their relative motions are constrained, and by which force and motion may be transmitted and applied to the production of some desired effect.” In mechanics, nothing better than a machine can be desired. This is the age of machines and a machine is always more than a match for untrained hand labor.

In almost every state and every city of any size, there is what is commonly known in politics as “the machine”. It is an organization of men who go into politics more or less as a business. They give time, thought, energy to it. They all have a common purpose and they work together with a harmony which makes the name machine eminently appropriate. Sometimes they do no great harm—they simply win where the other men fail. The reason that the other men fail is because they are in politics only in a half-hearted way, and they act without concert. When the time for the caucus comes the machine is ready. It has its candidates for delegates. It knows just whom these delegates, if elected,

will vote for. It knows whom the men nominated by the delegates will vote for. It has a complete list of candidates who can be depended on, from the local precinct to the United States Senate. The machine has been attending to this business all the time. It is a compact organization, thoroughly disciplined, knowing its own men, able to predict the result, and in most cases sure to win. The dissatisfied element outside, good citizens, reformers, grumblers, loud advocates of pure politics, have no perfect organization, no plan that is worthy of the name, no candidates who are more than half-hearted in the fight, and so to the last everything is at sixes and sevens, a great deal of honest purpose and virtuous patriotism is wasted—not for anything very positive, but mainly to smash the machine—and the machine wins. There is no help for it. The regular army always beats the mob. It pays once in a great while to expose a company of raw militia to the fire of a thousand regulars, as it did on Lexington Green on the nineteenth of April, 1775; but in the ordinary processes of war it is a criminal waste of life. And in politics it is hardly less a criminal waste of energy and high sentiment to array against a compact political organization having a definite purpose, an unorganized mass of citizens, with-

out discipline, without leaders, and without plans.

If men want pure politics and honest officials they must give systematic attention to the matter, and not trust to a little spirit of excitement just before election, when, in all probability, it is too late to do any good. Eternal diligence is the price of honest legislation as well as of liberty.

No one certainly can dislike the machine, in its ordinary sense as a combination for corrupt purposes, more heartily than I do. But a machine is all right if it is properly used and used for proper purposes. And the only way to fight a bad machine is with a good one. If honesty is ever to win in politics, the men who desire it must take their first lesson in practical politics from the machine and organize to some purpose. And until people who believe in honest legislation can be so banded together as to act with some of the efficiency of the machine, there is very little use in the individual citizen's trying to pull up tares in the field of politics, except it be for his own moral exercise and growth.

If your idea of a proper caucus is one to which men shall go without any forethought as to candidates, your idea will never be realized. Somebody will have thought about it. If you have not, the machine doubtless

has. Organization, concert of action among men of like minds is not only proper, but desirable.

If the object to be secured is a good one, it is no worse because there has been an organized effort to secure it. Of course if the object to be secured is bad and the machine works for it, the machine is bad; but it is so because it is working for evil and not at all because it is a machine. The lesson to be derived from all this is just what Edmund Burke said more than a hundred years ago, "When bad men combine the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle." My point is this. Be earnestly active for something good, and not merely active against something bad. Keep sowing wheat, and do not confine your energies to pulling up tares. It is all right to remove temptation from the young by shutting up saloons and gambling dens if you can; but it is better to fill the minds of the rising generations with high ideals of noble living than to spend *all* your energies in removing temptations. It is even better to have men who cannot be tempted than it is to have no temptation.

Organize them for the attainment of the best things, and not merely for the temporary suppression of bad things. There will be, in

spite of all that you can do, a good many tares growing with the wheat until the harvest; but it will be a poor harvest, indeed, even if you pull up all the tares, if at the end there is no wheat.

There are those who say that civilization and even the Christian Church are built upon injustice and robbery, and there is nothing to be done but to let both go and return to the simplicity of nature. That seems to me a wholesale rooting up of the wheat in order to get rid of the tares. Learning, Science, Literature, Art and Religion have been doing their best for centuries to make the world better; and they have succeeded in evolving from the primeval savage the modern civilized man and from the primitive selfish degradation the modern methodical and systematic care for self mixed with not a little altruism or brotherly kindness—and now our modern prophets want to destroy civilization and all that it implies, because, forsooth, some people own property which they never earned, and the members of the Christian Church, unlike their Master, have every night where to lay their heads. And yet these prophets sleep regularly on just as soft pillows as the rest of the Church, and draw their salaries from the accumulations of civilization with as much regularity and zest as if they liked it.

There is no question whatever as to what a man's attitude towards all recognized wrong ought to be. If he is a true man, it cannot be anything but an attitude of disapproval. But it is a question and a momentous question what he shall do about it. Here comes in the warning of Jesus, "Lest ye root up the wheat also. Let both grow together until the harvest." Ah! there is to be a harvest, is there? Be comforted, my brother, you who have vexed your righteous soul with the unlawful deeds of the wicked, like Lot in Sodom—be comforted. There will be a harvest, and the harvest comes with great regularity, sometimes to individuals and sometimes to nations. A good many things will be revealed at the harvest. First, it will be found that the tares are not wheat. Second, it will be found that the Lord of the harvest does not value tares as He does wheat, and next it will be found that He does not make the same disposition of tares that He does of wheat. There comes a time, you see, when tares are neither mistaken for wheat nor treated as wheat. Suppose you do not dig up all the tares you see. There is sure to come a time when the tares will be got rid of. The harvest is a great discriminator.

The wheat will be gathered into the barn. It is valuable. It will feed and sustain men

and women and children. The tares will be burned—not as fuel—they are worth nothing even as fuel—they will be burned not to do good, but simply to get rid of them. They are worthless—worse than worthless. They must be destroyed, because they are noxious. Bind them in bundles and burn them—and the rascality that you have longed to fight goes out at last in the cleansing flames of an awakened public conscience.

Does all this appear like lowering the standard of duty? Is a true life substantially summed up in minding your own business? Well—a good many lives would be better than they are if they were so summed up. But that is not my meaning. I have not yet said quite all that I have to say. There is one further lesson to be learned from Jesus and it is the most important one.

Jesus was, indeed, wonderfully patient. Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? Jesus let Judas stay among the disciples as long as he would. He knew what Judas was; yet, He did not turn him out, excommunicate him, nor do anything else to him of a disciplinary nature. If He, with His perfect character, could stand the presence of such a being, we ought to be able to stand it till the harvest, if it is necessary.

But with all His tenderness towards all

classes of men, Jesus never left the wrongdoer in doubt as to His judgment of the wrongdoer's character. Even Judas knew that the Master understood him.

Jesus treated the woman of Samaria with great kindness. No other Jew would have talked with her. His disciples were astonished when they found Him talking to her, for the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. But the woman did not go away with the impression that Jesus approved of her mode of life. When He said to her, "He whom thou now hast is not thy husband," she knew what He thought of her.

Do not so associate with evil men as to make them believe that you think that they are all right. Jesus never did that.

To the woman condemned under the law, but at whom no man was found innocent enough to cast the first stone, Jesus said: "Neither do I condemn thee." I do not pass sentence of punishment upon you. But "go and sin no more," told her what He thought of her life and conduct. God forbid that any one of us should refuse to give a helping hand to man or woman who, having been bad, repents and tries to be good. For them, the message spoken in kindness must always be, "Go and sin no more."

"He receiveth sinners and eateth with

them," said the Pharisees. Only six days before the crucifixion they said of Him as He went to the house of Zaccheus, the chief tax gatherer of Jericho, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." They would not have done so. But He did. Was He less opposed to sin and crime than they were? But He did not go to be "hail fellow well met" with sinners, whether publicans or Pharisees. He associated with them only for their good, and He never sought to curry favor with them by pretending that He thought that they were on the whole ideal men. The Pharisee who thought he was doing Jesus great honor to admit Him to his table, and who was greatly disturbed because a woman who was a sinner had been permitted by Jesus to anoint His feet with ointment after she had washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair—receives the rebuke he deserves, high-toned aristocrat though he was. "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet. Thou gavest me no kiss. My head with oil thou didst not anoint. I have received at your hands no special kindness and hardly ordinary civility; but this woman at whose presence you are sneering, has with marvelous tenderness, unselfishness and liberality, more than supplied the defects of your self-complacent hospitality. Wherefore I say

unto thee, her sins which are many—no concealment of that fact even in the presence of the woman—which are many, are forgiven her—for she loved much.”

Jesus was the friend of publicans and sinners, as the Pharisees said. He was a helpful friend, full of sympathy and kindness and charity. But He never associated with them as persons with whose life He was satisfied and whose character He approved. He met them always as one trying to lift them out of evil and induce them to seek a better life. In a word His charity was no bestial indifference to the distinction between good and evil, or between honest men and knaves.

There is a proper time for pulling up tares, and when that time comes, they should be uprooted. First, in the development of our own character. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. Second, in our relations to others—whenever the results will not be injurious to the general good. And third, with nations, whenever humanity demands it that the organized power of Christian states shall be used for the relief and protection of the oppressed and down-trodden.

Such a time came not long ago to Christian Europe, when Turkey had filled up the meas-

ure of her iniquity by the murder of tens of thousands of helpless Armenians—her own subjects. But the Concert of Nations of Christian Europe, silent, selfish, jealous of each other, afraid of each other, stood by and permitted the Turk, already drenched to the shoulders in the blood of Armenia, to proceed still further and cut the throats of their brothers of Christian Greece in their heroic but useless struggle. Then was the time for these nations to strike a blow which would have avenged the wrongs of centuries. Then was the time for the rooting up of tares without the slightest danger of rooting up wheat—there being none in Turkey to uproot. But Christian Europe, because the nations could not agree and a general European war was deemed worse even than the murder of Armenians, reserved its strength for the easier task of dismembering and parceling out China in the East, and left the unspeakable Turk undisturbed and unpunished.

It has been reserved for the young republic of the West to set for Christendom an example of a foreign policy inspired not by selfishness, but by generosity and real nobility of spirit.

Our country is now engaged in a war with Spain, entered into, so far as appears, with little or no prospect of material gain to ourselves, but solely in the interest of humanity

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—to protect the people of Cuba from cruelty and wrong heaped upon them for centuries by Spanish oppression. No war was ever engaged in by any nation for more unselfish reasons; and if the God of Battles shall give the victory to our arms on sea and land, as I cannot doubt that He will, my earnest hope is that my country may not forget the high mission of mercy in which it is engaged, and may not, carried away by the lust of power and glory, convert a great contest in the interest of humanity, which ought to be an inspiring example to Christendom for all time to come, into an ordinary struggle for wider dominion and the gratification of unholy ambition. God save the Republic.

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